



Fig.1: Existing view of Carlisle House from the south-west

Project:

Residential Refurbishment & Alterations

Site Address:

**Carlisle House,
118 Oxford Road,
Reading
RG1 7NG**

Client:

Turner Property Ltd

Document Title:

**Design, Access & Heritage
Statement**

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Fig.2: Existing view of Carlisle House from the south

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Statement is written as a supporting document for a Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Application to Reading Borough Council associated with development at Carlisle House, 118 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7NG.

The development proposals involve comprehensive refurbishment and change of use from 4no. dwelling flats (C3a use) to become 6no. dwelling flats (C3a use). The expansion of accommodation is enabled by:

- Internal layout modification
- Refurbishment of the existing lower ground floor rooms
- Extension of the existing second floor in-roof accommodation

In addition to the existing building refurbishment and alteration works, the following associated elements are proposed:

- Boundary treatment improvements
- Construction of plant room and cycle store out-buildings
- Comprehensive hard and soft landscaping improvements

The existing residential accommodation is not of high quality and many building elements are in a poor dilapidated state requiring comprehensive repair or replacement.

The development proposals will:

- Enhance the appearance and setting of the listed building along with the appearance of the wider Conservation Area
- Provide significant improvements to the quality of residential accommodation
- Deliver more effective use of the existing building, expanding the amount of residential accommodation assists to financially enable the required refurbishment and ensure the longer-term sustainability for upkeep of the heritage asset.

Due to the listed building status and general complexity of the proposed development, we propose for further discussion with the Local Authority Heritage Officer to agree on the final approach and detailing of the alterations proposed. We look forward to working in an effective and collaborative manner with the Reading Borough Council Planning Department in order to progress the development forward and deliver the significant enhancements required to better secure longevity for this important site and building.

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Weston & Co Architects:

18009_9.1_22.03.25_PS_Photographic Survey
18009-PL-01 Location and Block Plans
18009-PL-02 Existing Site Plan
18009-PL-03 Proposed Site Plan
18009-PL-04 Existing Lower Ground and Ground Floor Plans
18009-PL-05 Existing First and Second Floor Plans
18009-PL-06 Existing West and South Elevations
18009-PL-07 Existing East and North Elevations
18009-PL-08 Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan
18009-PL-09 Proposed Ground Floor Plan
18009-PL-10 Proposed First Floor Plan
18009-PL-11 Proposed Second Floor Plan
18009-PL-12 Proposed Roof Plan
18009-PL-13 Proposed West Elevation
18009-PL-14 Proposed South Elevation
18009-PL-15 Proposed East Elevation
18009-PL-16 Proposed North Elevation
18009-PL-17 Existing & Proposed Boundary Wall Elevations
18009-PL-18 Proposed Cycle Store & Plant Room Elevations
18009-PL-19 Proposed South Elevation - Rendered

Designer Landscapes:

Garden Design Statement
Landscape Plan
Planting Plan P1
Planting Plan P2
Planting Plan P3
Planting Plan P4

S J Stephens Associates:

1621_Arboricultural Impact Assessment 21.03.22
1621-02A_Tree Protection Plan

John Wenman Ecological Consultancy:

R2496d_Preliminary Ecological Assessment

2.0 SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT

2.1 Site Location

The application site is located approximately 300metres to the west side of Reading town-centre on the north side of Oxford Road. As a result, the development is in a very sustainable location benefiting from excellent access to a broad range of employment, retail, leisure and transport opportunities.



Fig.3: Aerial photograph extract

The site is also located within the Russell Street and Oxford Road Conservation Area at its northern boundary.

2.2 Site Context

The character of Oxford Road adjacent to the application site is generally defined by the Georgian and Victorian terraced buildings containing a mix of uses often with commercial active frontages at street level. The character of the site is very different with significant 50-metre and 11-metre building setback away from Oxford Road and Trinity Place respectively. The spacious southern and eastern portions of the site provide the existing green shared amenity space which is proposed to be enhanced with a high-quality, more formal landscaped garden appropriate to the grandeur of the listed building.



Fig.4: View of Oxford Road's Georgian Terraces to the South of the site

The grade II listed Church of the Holy Trinity is located to the south east of Carlisle House on the neighbouring plot, fronting onto Oxford Road. The majority of the shared boundary in this location is defined by a stone retaining wall creating the ramped access from the church's Oxford Road frontage down to the crypt beneath the church. Along the retaining wall boundary within the Carlisle House site are located several self-seeded sycamore trees which have been allowed to grow un-restrained and are now causing significant damage to the retaining boundary wall between the two listed buildings. These large sycamore trees, when in leaf, also block out very significant amounts of daylight to the south and east facing rooms at Carlisle House. As part of the application, it is proposed for the sycamore trees to be removed and replaced with other more appropriate tree planting on the site.



Fig.5: View of self-seeded sycamore trees causing partial collapse to boundary retaining wall

2.0 SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT

The neighbouring plot which cuts into the south western corner of the application site accommodates the modern Oddfellows Hall building which houses the Reading branch of the Oddfellows community support charity. In between the Oddfellows Hall and Holy Trinity Church plots is located the 7.5-metre-long Oxford Road street frontage of the Carlisle House site which offers pedestrian and cycle access. The current brickwork and steel railed gate boundary treatment is not original and is proposed to be replaced as part of the application with a higher quality solution more congruous with the status of Carlisle House.



Fig.6: View of Carlisle House Oxford Road frontage between the Oddfellows Hall (L) and Holy Trinity Church (R)

The existing vehicle access to the application site is located within the western boundary providing access directly to the resident's car parking area. Along the western boundary with Trinity Place there are regular pollarded Lime trees within the site abutting the attractive original stone boundary wall. The existing vehicle access gates are of relatively poor quality and are proposed to be replaced with a more appropriate solution.



Fig.7: View of western boundary with Trinity Place and vehicle access gates which are to be replaced.

Due to an historic significant reduction to the Carlisle House plot size to the north and east there are only small building set-backs from the boundaries ranging between 2 and 5 metres. There are modern housing blocks located to the west and north west of the site, car parking to the north, a dilapidated and vacant office building to the north east and night club building located to the east.



Fig.8-9: View of Carlisle House from the north east (L) and the north (R), illustrating the inherently awkward relationship between the listed building and it's north and eastern boundaries.

To the west of the application site lies the Reading Borough Council Local Plan allocated Chatham Street, Eaton Place and Oxford Road development site ref: CR12c. This site has been identified for predominantly residential and community use development with potential to provide 180-260 dwellings.

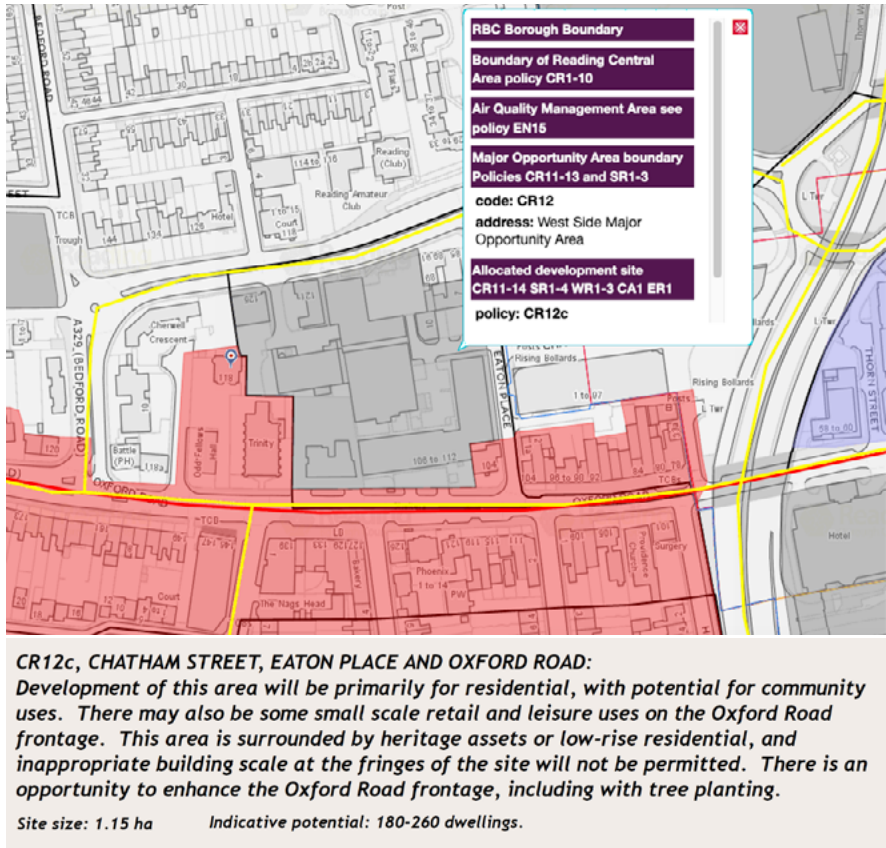


Fig.10-11: Extract from Reading Borough Council Planning Proposals Map and allocation description of site ref: CR12c

2.0 SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT

Refer to the separate Photographic Survey document ref: 18009_9.1_22.03.25 to gain a more thorough understanding of the physical context of the site and building context.

2.3 Building & Tenancy Context

Carlisle House itself was originally built as a grand house for the clergy serving Trinity Church in the Victorian era which was then subsequently subdivided into 4no. flats during the 1930s. The change of use to separate flats fundamentally altered the internal layout principle and was not carried out in a sensitive manner resulting in fairly significant harm to the appearance and arrangement of the building. Additional information describing the historic and current arrangement of the site and building is provided within the Heritage and Layout sections of this statement. Additional clarifications describing how improvements to the site and building are proposed are provided within the Layout, Appearance and Landscaping sections of this statement.



Fig.12: View of south elevation with non-original central entrance door and windows

The Applicant acquired the site with the existing building in a state of disrepair with the following significant dilapidations:

- Significant electrical safety issues which require all electrical wiring installation to be replaced
- No central heating to the flats
- Significant damp issues
- Structural issues particularly relating to the ground floor

At the time of purchase, of the 4no. tenants, 2 had protected tenancies (flats 1 and 3). The flat 1 tenant was elderly and vacated to sheltered housing accommodation elsewhere. The flat 3 tenant was re-housed by the Applicant in alternative accommodation due to the state of disrepair and electrical safety issues. The flat 4 tenant remains acting as a caretaker assisting to prevent the building from becoming a target for breaking / entering and unlawful occupation.

The building is currently in poor condition requiring extensive repair involving expensive works. The extension to habitable accommodation within the existing basement / lower ground floor and the second floor providing the additional two flats serve as enabling development for the works assisting to ensure future longevity for the listed building.



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 13-15: Photographs of building dilapidations

2.0 SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT

2.4 Northern Stepped Lightwell Context

There exists an unusual issue relating to land ownership of the stepped access lightwell on the northern side of the house within the site. This lightwell is located wholly within the Land Registry Title and current curtilage of Carlisle House, however it is legally owned by Reading Borough Council.

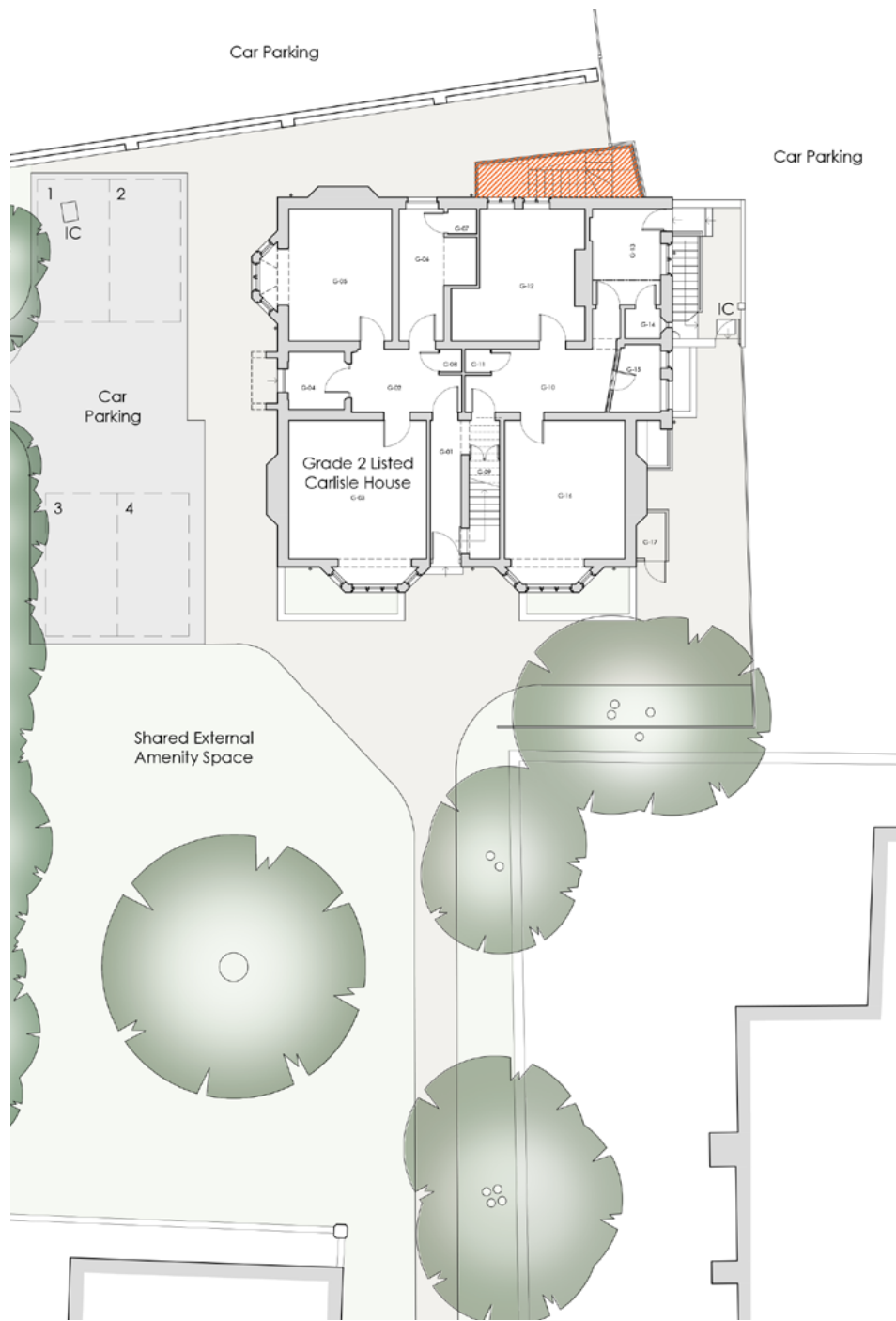


Fig. 16: Extract from Existing Site Plan drawing ref 18009-PL-02 highlighting site portion owned by Reading Borough Council (hatched orange)



Fig. 17: Photograph of stepped access lightwell owned by Reading Borough Council

We consider that this situation has arisen due to a possible historic conveyancing error when land to the north of Carlisle House has been carved-up and sold for development. The Applicant seeks to use this planning application to enable discussion with the relevant Reading Borough Council department in order to better resolve this issue and return this small isolated parcel of land to the Carlisle House ownership Title.